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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 4561
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0983
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1351
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 0606
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0747
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 0654
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0607
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0699
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PESHAWAR 000537

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/16/2018
TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: NWFP: GOVERNOR GHANI AGREES TO RESUME FREE FLOW OF TRUCK
TRAFFIC

REF: PESHAWAR 523

CLASSIFIED BY: Michael A. Via, Acting Principal Officer,
Peshawar, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)
Summary

11. (S/NF) Northwest Frontier Province Governor (NWFP) Owais Ghani told Principal Officer (PO) during a December 13 visit to his office in Peshawar that the free flow of truck traffic between Peshawar and the Afghanistan border near Torkham could resume now that the Eid holidays are over. There were three groups that attacked the truck terminals in the run up to Eid, one of which was led by a local militant affiliated with Baitullah Mehsud. The Governor said that the militant used the aliases "Yahya," "Idrat," and "Mustafa Kamran", full name Maulvi Hijrat Yahya, and was captured when he came to Peshawar for Eid shopping (NFI). Publicly, the Governor said, the government is not confirming reports circulating in the press about this arrest. (Note: While there may be some confusion over the aliases used by the individual captured, the individual in custody appears to have played a substantial role in planning the killing of our USAID contractor and the attack on the Principal Officer. End Note.)

12. (C) The Governor said that he had raised again the need for funds to increase the size of the police force with President Zardari but had received no commitment. The truck terminals on the southern side of Peshawar that have been the site of recent attacks were vulnerable because some had no walls and a very small guard force on duty. (Note: This point was confirmed by a Consulate employee who visited the site.) Ghani suggested that shipping contractors look for alternative sites, possibly near Attock, to stage cargo. Ghani's proposal to stage convoys outside of the NWFP in neighboring Punjab province is probably motivated by a genuine desire to avoid future attacks and not simply to move the problem out of his area of responsibility. End Summary.

Ghani Agrees to Free Flow of Truck Traffic

13. (C) Ghani agreed that the free flow of truck traffic between Peshawar and the Afghanistan border near Torkham could resume

now that the Eid holidays are over. The Governor felt that the volume could average 75 trucks per day in the run up to Muharram but that he would tell the Khyber Political Agent to surge on some days approaching 150 trucks per day. He also said that the route would not be completely closed during Muharram, but the flow of traffic is expected to be greatly reduced in an as yet unspecified fifteen day period around the Muharram holidays. (Note: The month of Muharram falls from December 18 - January 15, 2009. The officially observed holidays which are generally 2-3 days are expected to fall on dates o/a January 5.)

Recent Terminal Attacks

14. (C) Ghani told PO truck terminals on the southern side of Peshawar which have been the site of recent attacks, were vulnerable because some had no walls and a small guard force on duty. He claimed that security for the terminals was the primary responsibility of the terminal owners who should strengthen the guard force at each site. Ghani said there were three groups that attacked the terminals, one of which was led by a militant using several aliases, including "Yahya," "Idrat," and "Mustafa Kamran," whom they had captured when he came to Peshawar for Eid shopping (date of arrest NFI). While there are reports circulating in the press about the arrest, the government, Ghani said, is not publicly confirming the capture. The origins and leaders of the other groups were as yet unknown.

According to post contacts and press reporting dozens of trucks and containers of coalition supplies have been destroyed during the first two weeks of December, including an attack in the early hours of December 13 (reftel).

Ghani Meets with President Zardari

15. (C) Ghani said he had raised again the need for funds to

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increase the size of the police force with Zardari in a December 12 meeting. He complained that the immediate release of funds to hire additional police promised a month earlier had not yet materialized. He told Zardari "you want results but you are not giving us the resources." Ghani said a meeting with Zardari, himself and the Secretary of Finance would likely occur on December 16 or 17 in Islamabad. IG Police Malik Naveed told PO on December 11 that NWFP Chief Minister Hoti is dipping into the development budget to pay for the planned 2,500 Elite Police, of which 1,000 would be assigned to Peshawar. Ghani confirmed this by stating that GOP funds planned for bridge and road projects were being diverted to fund the police.

Ghani Suggests Alternative Sites To Stage Cargo

16. (C) Ghani suggested that shipping contractors look for alternative sites to stage cargo based on the lack of security at the current sites. His preferred site is Attock, east of Peshawar in Punjab Province. He reasoned that trucks could take off early in the morning from Attock, and pass through the Khyber Pass the same day. He stated that he is committed to working the clearances to make the same day transit possible. Ghani said that terminals in Peshawar could still be used as a brief rest stop or as a backup for sudden or unforeseen delays, but the owners of the terminals in the Peshawar area had to strengthen security at these sites.

Comment

17. (C) Ghani seemed engaged and aware of the details surrounding truck traffic for coalition supplies. His proposal to stage convoys outside of the NWFP in neighboring Punjab province is probably motivated by a genuine desire to avoid future attacks and not simply to move the problem out of his area of responsibility.

VIA